

REMARKS

The Official Action of 9 December 2005 has been carefully considered and reconsideration of the application as amended is respectfully requested.

Claims 1 and 69 have been amended, and new claims 70-71 have been added, in accordance with the disclosure in the specification as filed at, for example, page 23, third paragraph, and page 24, first full paragraph.

As described in the specification, the claimed surface treatment method is performed on a recording medium having at least a cyan image. This is in line with Applicants' discovery that the deterioration of cyan images due to poor gas resistance is conspicuously alleviated by the claimed surface treatment (see specification at page 24, first full paragraph). Generally, picture deterioration occurs easily in a recording medium with a cyan image recorded. However, the surface treatment method according to the claimed invention makes it possible to reduce substantially cyan image deterioration.

This is shown, by way of example, in the Examples appearing on pages 90-93 of the specification, and specifically Examples 17-19 (see Table 1 on page 92), wherein it is shown that an after-treatment with a treatment agent comprising the recited sulfur compounds results in an improved effect in both light resistance and gas resistance of the recorded matter in the evaluations described on pages 90-91.

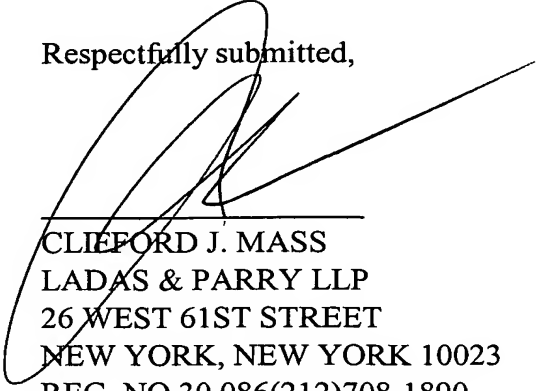
The Examiner has rejected the claims under 35 USC 102(b) or under 35 USC 103(a) as allegedly being anticipated by or unpatentable over Ishida et al, but the reference does not show or suggest the recorded matter as now claimed or a method for using a treatment agent for forming a protective layer on the recorded matter.

Ishida relates to a method for processing a silver salt photosensitive material used for a printer for silver salt photo printing. Therefore, a color negative film is treated with a fixing solution. The fixing solution is **not** used for forming a protective layer on a recording medium with at least a cyan image recorded. Moreover, there is nothing in the prior art that would motivate one of skill in the art to modify the teachings of the reference to arrive at the claimed invention. In particular, there is nothing that would show or suggest using the “fixing agent” in Ishida as a treatment agent for forming a protective layer on a recorded matter comprising at least a cyan image.

In view of the above, it is respectfully submitted that the cited reference cannot set forth even a *prima facie* case of anticipation or obviousness for the invention as now claimed. Moreover, even if the reference could set forth a *prima facie* case of obviousness, it is respectfully submitted that the evidence of record showing the advantageous effects of the claimed treatment (see discussion above) would be sufficient to rebut such *prima facie* case.

Accordingly, Applicants submit that all rejections and objections of record have now been overcome and that the application is now in allowable form. An early notice of allowance is earnestly solicited and is believed to be fully warranted.

Respectfully submitted,



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